
IRAQ'S SADR SAYS NOT TO ALLOW FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IN NEW GOVERNMENT LINEUP

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02.07.2018

Iraqi News (1 July 2018)

by Mohammed Ebraheem

Baghdad (Iraqinews.com) □ Iraqi Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr said on Sunday that he will not allow any foreign party to interfere in the formation of the new government, the first in the country since the crushing defeat of Islamic State last year.

Sadr's remarks came at a meeting with Head of the European Union mission in Iraq Ramon Blecu and the charge d'affaires of the Spanish Embassy in Iraq, his media office said in a statement.

The two sides tackled means of supporting the democratic process in Iraq, particularly the recent parliamentary elections, as well as the formation of the new government, the statement read.

During the meeting, Sadr stressed his keenness on forming a national government that could meet aspirations of the Iraqi people and provide stability and security for Iraq.

Al-Sadr's Sairoon coalition won 54 parliamentary seats in the May 12 parliamentary polls, followed by an al-Hashd al-Shaabi-linked coalition (47 seats) and Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi's Victory bloc (42 seats), according to the election commission.

The vote results, however, have aroused widespread fraud allegations.

Al-Sadr's coalition did not win the majority needed to form a government alone but will play a primary role in selecting the next prime minister.

Known for his hostile approach to the U.S., al-Sadr is one of few Shia leaders who don't have close ties with Iran.

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